

April 16, 2021

Dear Members of the Illinois General Assembly:

Thank you for taking the time to hold hearings on the critical issue of redistricting in Western Illinois.

To quote former President Barack Obama, “In America, politicians should not pick their voters; voters should pick their politicians.” I want to add my voice to the multitude of voices throughout the state that want new maps guided by community – and not partisan – interest.

To accomplish that, I urge you to conduct a well-publicized process – in every region of the state – that allows for significant public input. But, equally as important, once there are final maps drafted I urge you to provide the public a genuine opportunity to provide input before a vote is cast. It is important that the final maps reflect public input, region by region, because the public deserves maps that value their input.

A goal guiding the process should be having the Illinois General Assembly demonstrate to the public how it followed the suggestions generated by public input. To do anything less would be to undermine confidence and trust that citizens have in state government.

At the heart of any good government is accountability and trust. With 75% of Illinois citizens favoring fair and independent maps, the Illinois General Assembly has a great opportunity to follow the will of the people on this important matter.

As a former member of the Illinois House Democrat issues development staff, I know we have only one chance to get this right every ten years. Let’s get it right.

Thank you for listening.

Sincerely,

Porter McNeil

Moline, IL